

Fairer Scotland Action Plan, Shifting the Curve and the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland

Progress Report 2020

December 2020

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Ministerial foreword



This year's annual Fairer Scotland Action Plan Progress Report provides an update on the actions within the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, and, similar to last year's report, also includes an update on the recommendations in the two reports produced by our then Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality.

I recognise that this is a difficult time for many families and more people are facing financial insecurity from the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19). We know that the effects of this awful virus have been felt unevenly and particularly keenly by the most disadvantaged people and communities. More than ever, the pandemic has highlighted the need to tackle poverty and inequality to support people in need, and we are already taking significant action in this regard.

In 2019-20 our estimated spend targeted at children in low income households increased by £144 million to £672 million. Similarly, spend on low income households increased by £554 million to £1.96 billion.

To help tackle the digital divide in Scotland, which has been shown in sharp focus during the pandemic when physical ways of staying in touch and contact were restricted, we invested £43 million to allow us to reach 50,000 low income households, providing a device, internet connection, training and support to get people online.

We are also building on the holistic support model of our Parental Employability Support Fund, by making a further £2.35 million available this financial year as a boost to the £5 million already allocated. This investment is in addition to the £100 million of employment measures and will provide vital support to parents who may have seen their hours and earnings reduced as a result of COVID-19. Importantly, it will help young and disabled parents facing additional barriers to the labour market to progress toward employment and access the opportunities available.

We recognise that more families are now relying on benefits due to the events of this year therefore we have prioritised delivery of the Scottish Child Payment for families with children under the age of six. This is in recognition of its importance in our efforts to tackle child poverty, helping those who would be facing even more hardship as a result of COVID-19. We opened applications for the Scottish Child Payment on 9 November 2020 and the benefit will start on 15 February 2021. Introducing a benefit in under 18 months from announcement to delivery is unprecedented in the UK and is a testimony to the priority that the Scottish Government has put on tackling child poverty. It is the biggest benefit that we have introduced to date, and could support up to 194,000 children this financial year¹.

We are doing everything we can to help people, communities and the third sector through this horrendous pandemic and have invested over £480 million in support. This includes our initial investment of £350 million communities funding in March, a further £30 million to local authorities in October to tackle financial insecurity over winter, including provision of free school meals over holidays to Easter, and the £100 million Winter Plan for Social Protection for families and children announced on 30 November. The Winter Plan will help those on low incomes, children and people at risk of homelessness or social isolation cope with winter weather and the economic impact of the coronavirus and Brexit.

We are not alone in taking action to make Scotland a fairer and more inclusive country. It is through well-established partnerships that we are able to continue making progress in realising our vision of a Fairer Scotland. This will be the final progress report on the current Fairer Scotland Action Plan and I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all the organisations who continue to work in partnership with us to realise our vision of a Fairer Scotland, in particular to those organisations who made annual fairness pledges in previous progress reports.

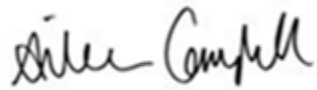
I know that the wide reaching impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are yet to be fully understood and, in addition to uncertainty surrounding Brexit, alongside continuing UK Government welfare cuts, we are entering a challenging and largely unknown future. As we navigate our way through and out of the current public health crisis it is clear that there remains significant challenges ahead.

We have worked across portfolios, with a range of partners, dramatically changed our way of working and delivered positive outcomes in a number of areas in addition to our immediate health response and have done so whilst putting equality and human rights at the heart of our response.

As our focus moves to 'Recovery' and 'Renew' phases, we aim to build on policy and practice changes that have shown the potential to be genuinely transformative. We are now taking forward a programme of Social Renewal, which will seek to shape the new normal that we now move into. This includes our recently established Social Renewal Advisory Board which will provide independent advice to support Ministers in overcoming the challenges faced and help drive progress towards a fairer, more equal Scotland in the wake of COVID-19.

¹ <https://www.fiscalcommission.scot/forecast/supplementary-costing-scottish-child-payment/>

There is no doubt that the coming year presents challenges in abundance, but it also offers us opportunities - to learn from the response to COVID-19 and to work together to 'build forward better', reducing poverty and inequality at every level across Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aileen Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Aileen Campbell
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

Introduction

The Scottish Government made a commitment to provide the Scottish Parliament with an annual report on progress made in relation to the Fairer Scotland Action Plan² (FSAP) published in 2016. This report follows similar reports published in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

FSAP is built on five high-level ambitions that we will continue to focus on in the period to 2030: a fairer Scotland for all; ending child poverty; a strong start for all young people; fairer working lives; and a thriving third age. It contains 50 actions that we will take across this parliamentary term with a call to everyone to create a fairer, more equal society. The action plan supports the vision for a fair, smart, inclusive Scotland, where everyone can feel at home. It also sets out our ambition for a country where poverty rates are amongst the lowest in Europe, and where there is genuine equality of opportunity for all by 2030.

Similar to the 2019 FSAP Progress Report, this progress report also provides an update on the actions taken in relation to two reports published by the then Independent Poverty and Inequality Advisor, Naomi Eisenstadt. *Shifting the Curve*³ (StC), published in 2016, details 15 recommendations for the Scottish Government and others to help shift the curve on poverty and reduce poverty levels in Scotland significantly.

One recommendation from this report was to review the life chances of young people in Scotland. A review carried out by Scottish Government analysts, published in July 2017⁴, formed the basis of Naomi Eisenstadt's second report. *The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland*⁵ (Life Chances) was published in 2017 and offers 18 further recommendations on how to best support young people aged 16-24, regardless of their background. These recommendations are focused on ensuring young people have the best start in adult life and helping to create the conditions that provides them with the best chances of success. This progress report provides the first update on progress made against the Life Chances report recommendations.

Rather than publishing three separate updates, we have produced this single short thematic progress report. The themes in this report are:

- Employment, including youth employment
- Education and childcare
- Housing
- Social security and benefit up-take
- Social policy
- Equality
- Health, including mental health

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-advisor-poverty-inequality-shifting-curve-report-first-minister/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/life-chances-young-people-scotland-evidence-review-first-ministers-independent/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-advisor-poverty-inequality-life-chances-young-people-scotland-report/>

Each theme has its own section which begins with a brief strategic overview that sets out the Scottish Government's aims and ambitions in this area. This is followed by the relevant recommendations/actions from the three reports.

There are some actions and recommendations which do not fit into any of the themes listed above. A separate update is provided on these towards the end of the progress report under 'Other actions'.

We are mindful that a number of the recommendations and actions contained in the three reports also feature in our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Where this is the case and the update provided in the second [Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report](#) (TCPPR), published on 20 August 2020, remains the most up to date position, we have taken the decision not to include a further update in this report, particularly given the short time lapse between both reports. Readers are instead signposted to the TCPPR.

We have also provided a table which sets out our progress at a glance, offering a quick overview of the current status of the actions or recommendations across all three reports. The actions and recommendations were short, medium and longer term up to 2030 and therefore we have used the following key:

Completed	Action or recommendation completed
In progress	Progress on the action or recommendation
Continuous programme of work	Some recommendations or actions ask us to 'do more' or 'improve' with no clear end point. These are defined as continuous
Early stages of delivery	Initial phases of delivery

Where a recommendation or action was marked as 'completed' in the 2019 previous progress report, that recommendation or action will only feature in the at a glance table on pages 32 to 37.

Employment, including youth employment

Central to our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is a new national mission to help create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs. Working with employers and individuals to build the skills and infrastructure that we all need to succeed, in the industries of the future.

To help our young people into good jobs at a time when they are most vulnerable we will deliver our Young Person’s Guarantee – ensuring every young person has access to a job, education, training or development programme. To support people aged 25 years and over at risk of redundancy we will provide re-training opportunities through our new National Transition Training Programme.

Our economic recovery must be a green recovery. As part of our commitment we will dedicate £100 million over the next five years to a Green Jobs Fund, investing alongside businesses and organisations to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland.

FSAP	42. We will do more to promote the Living Wage
FSAP	43. We will do more to help people in Scotland work flexibly
FSAP	44. We will improve employment services for disabled people
FSAP	45. By the end of 2016, we will launch a pilot ‘Returners’ project to help bring experienced women back into the workplace after a career break
StC	1. Build on Living Wage Accreditation – a focus on larger employers, and on incentives, would be useful
StC	2. Encourage pay ratio disclosure as a way of tackling pay inequality
StC	4. Make family flexible working more explicit within the Business Pledge, and consider whether approaches such as the Timewise programme could promote flexible working in Scotland
StC	13. Do more to tackle occupational segregation
Life Chances	5. The Scottish Government should, through the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, ensure our FE and HE systems have more flex built in so young people can shift between routes
Life Chances	6. Employers need to think about ‘job design’ and recruitment processes that are free from bias and that match requirements for the job with the skill level needed to make applications
Life Chances	9. Lobby the UK Government about exploitative zero hour contracts

Updates on the recommendations and actions listed above can be found in the [Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report](#).

Fairer work

FSAP	46. We will tackle discrimination on pregnancy and maternity leave in the workplace
FSAP	47. We will help those older people who want to keep working after they have reached state pension age

The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women's jobs and incomes. Women have made up the majority of the workforce in many 'shut down' sectors, and in our care sector, as well as undertaking additional unpaid caring responsibilities. The vast majority of lone parents are women. All of this has made them more exposed to the impacts of earnings reductions or losses. Evidence highlights the potential damage the pandemic could do to women's employment and career opportunities longer term and the potential to increase both the gender employment gap and the gender pay gap in coming years. We will review the actions within our Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan to ensure they are fit for purpose and will effectively support our economic recovery through the pandemic and beyond

We are also taking immediate action and on 4 November 2020 we launched a £500,000 Women Returners Fund. The fund aims to support women returners across Scotland who have had a career break due to childcare, other care or health commitments. The programme seeks to support women to gain up to date skills, training and work experience to fill that gap in their CV while providing peer support and networking opportunities. This programme is more important now than ever due to the disproportionate economic impact COVID-19 has had on women's employment opportunities and earning potential.

The Women Returner's Fund will also help address the 'motherhood penalty', a key driver of the gender pay gap, and will respond to the 2015 Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) research findings on pregnancy and maternity discrimination. The findings of which revealed that 77% of women reported a negative or discriminatory pregnancy/maternity experience. In response to the 2015 EHRC Report recommendations Scottish Government took forward a suite of measures to tackle these issues head on. We have continued to work with relevant organisations from the public, private and third sectors, along with trade union representatives through our Pregnancy & Maternity Discrimination Working Group, chaired by the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills. The Group has responded to the EHRC recommendations by developing guidance and information to employers and workers on rights and responsibilities, sharing existing good practice and encouraging improved employment practices, communication and partnership working. As the Group nears the end of its remit we intend to invite a stakeholder member onto the Gender Pay Gap Working Group to allow pregnancy and maternity issues to be taken forward as part of that group's remit.

Following on from our response to the UK Government's consultation on its Good Work Plan, in January 2020 the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills wrote to the UK Government, urging them to improve the package of support offered to all parents. He recommended an increase in maternity pay for all women workers over a 52-week period, and a review of eligibility for maternity allowance. The Minister

also suggested an additional 12 weeks paid leave for fathers/partners on a non-transferable 'use it or lose it' basis. This supports and exceeds the recommendation from the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls report to provide two months of paid 'daddy leave'.

Increasing the level and length of statutory provision would provide financial support to families throughout the maternity leave period, supporting parents and children to get the best start in life and not feeling the imperative to return to work due to a low income level.

Going forward we will influence the development of the new Employment Bill urging the UK Government to strengthen parental pay and leave and protect women, including pregnant women, and carers against discrimination and dismissal and also introduce the right for all employees to request flexible working from day one of employment.

The need for better paid flexible work is felt most acutely by those experiencing higher levels of poverty, for example women, and in particular lone parents and those with larger families. In 2020 we provided flexible working experts Timewise with £132,000 to deliver a Fair Work Flexible Work Programme for Scotland. This will include training employment advisers to better support low income parents, carers, older workers and those with health issues to access flexible working. The Fair Flexible Work programme has been designed to benefit the specific priority family groups identified within Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan for whom access to better paid flexible work is evidenced to be a key factor in helping them to raise their household earnings.

Together with the Hunter Foundation we are also providing £175,000 in 2020/21 to Flexibility Works to assist employers to adapt to flexible working practices and by highlighting best practice, during and beyond the pandemic.

A Fairer Scotland for Older People – A Framework for Action⁶, published in April 2019 recognised that older people wanted flexible employment opportunities as well as measures to address issues around a rising retirement age. Actions in the Programme for Government support those aims including an initial £25 million National Training Transition Fund to provide retraining opportunities.

In October 2019, the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills launched the Workplace Equality Fund 2019/20. The fund aims to remove labour market barriers for certain protected characteristics including older workers.

The 2019/20 fund supported 25 projects with a collective £800,000 worth of funding. One of those projects involved Age Scotland providing Immersive Unconscious Bias training to private employers. Age Scotland also took part in the 2018/19 Workplace Equality Fund where they developed an Age Inclusive Matrix for employers.

As the economy recovers from the impact of COVID-19 officials are working with key stakeholders to shape the recovery plans to ensure that older workers are supported and older people who want to keep working can continue to do so.

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-older-people-framework-action/>

Living wage

Life Chances	10. Lobby the UK Government on the need for the National Living Wage to apply to all those over 18 years old
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The Scottish Government recognises the National Living Wage does not support young people under 25, nor will it fully compensate workers for reductions to welfare. Scottish Ministers continue to press the UK Government on this issue.

Young people's employment

FSAP	36. We will take action to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021
FSAP	37. We will significantly increase the numbers of young people getting industry experience while still at school to help them kick-start a successful career in their chosen field
Life Chances	2. Continue work to improve data collection and sharing to track post school participation in learning, training and work for young people and make better use of that information to improve service delivery and develop Scottish Government policy
Life Chances	3. Do more to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Developing the Young Workforce regional groups in building systematic engagement between local employers and schools and colleges on local and regional skills shortages
Life Chances	4. Do more to value non-academic learning routes, post-school
StC	11. Reduce the number of government-supported employment programmes targeting this group of young people and simplify the landscape, to provide a clearer, sharper focus
StC	12. Ensure that the new approach to employer engagement in education is having an impact on improving skills for work of young people

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, we were on target to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 through our Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Scotland's youth employment strategy, having originally achieved this in 2017. It is clear, however, that this will no longer be the case and as a result we are working with Education Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Agency, Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Skills Development Scotland to understand the implications Coronavirus will have on the implementation of DYW and the wider skills landscape. We also hope to build on the success of the 2019 #mylearnerjourney campaign promoting all learning routes.

Through our programme of COVID-19 response we have continued to provide opportunities for young people to engage with employers in an online setting. As a response to the increasing levels of youth unemployment we have secured an additional £10 million of investment in DYW's Regional Groups which will strengthen our offer to young people, particular in the senior phase with the roll out of DYW School Coordinators. Through these Groups we continue to build partnerships with

education and employers with approximately 4,000 in existence before the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the global health crisis we have flexed our model of delivery and continue to engage young people through our development of E-DYW⁷, DYW Skills Academy and Scotland's Big Parent's Events which were aimed at young people and those who support them. These have been viewed over 50,000 times.

We are also engaging with employers through the network of DYW Employer Groups to support continued employer engagement with schools and colleges. Student displacement whilst on Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships continues to be monitored by Skills Development Scotland. We are working with Education Scotland, Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland to consider the implications for transitions from school to college, university, apprenticeships and training providers and are focused on supporting more young people into positive destinations, despite the many challenges the Scottish economy faces.

The Scottish Government is also committed to increasing choices for learners and increasing flexibility within the further and higher education sectors. This is also central to the SFC Review recently commissioned by the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science. The Review will cover provision; delivery outcomes and targets; and funding, including support for research activity across the college and university sector. The outputs of the Review will form an important part of the Government's thinking on the future strategy for tertiary education.

Building on the Scottish/Local Government Partnership Agreement for employability and shared ambition for transformational change in the design, development and implementation of employability services, through our 'No One Left Behind' approach we will strive to support those who struggle most in the labour market. We published our No One Left Behind Delivery Plan on 24 November 2020 providing a renewed focus on partnership working across the employability system, building consensus with partners on the approach to be taken and providing clarity on future funding arrangements, timeline of implementation and governance of No One Left Behind.

In addition, we are working closely with Local Government partners to deliver employability and employment support for young people under the umbrella of the Young Person's Guarantee.

We have also been working with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to improve the data for 16-24 year olds which feeds into the Shared Dataset and the Annual Participation Measure (APM). The sharing of employment data will give more robust information for the 16-19 year olds in the APM age group and more detail on the employment status for 20-24 year olds.

⁷ <https://www.dyw.scot/edyw.html>

Education and childcare

Children and young people have been particularly impacted by the pandemic and we must ensure the best start in life for our children and young people, and enable them to grasp their potential. We are committed to delivering 1,140 hours free early learning and childcare and to begin to go further, looking at wraparound care options that will give families more choice, greater opportunities to work, and greater financial freedom.

Childcare for school-age children is equally important, and has a significant part to play in supporting people into work and to secure better jobs with higher incomes. We have committed to develop and deliver a framework for school age childcare during this Parliamentary term. This will set out a bold vision for school age childcare in Scotland and the steps we will take to make it more accessible and affordable.

Our central mission remains to deliver excellence and equity across Scottish education, with an immediate emphasis on supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

In July we announced £80 million of additional investment in education staff, sufficient for the recruitment of around 1,400 additional teachers and 200 support staff this year. It is anticipated that these additional teachers will intensify support for individuals or groups of pupils who have significant gaps in their progress as a result of lockdown.

The experience of lockdown shows that access to technology and digital capability is, and will remain, a fundamental aspect of education in Scotland. Despite pupils now being physically back at school, we are still committed to tackling digital exclusion. We are investing £30 million as part of a huge digital boost through provision of laptops for disadvantaged children and young people, which includes £25 million to enable rollout of digital devices to school pupils to enable them to study online.

FSAP	29. By 2020, entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) will almost double for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as those 2 year olds that stand to benefit most, to 1140 hours per year (from current levels of 600 hours per year)
FSAP	30. We will take action to reduce the costs of school for low income parents
FSAP	34. We will do more to address bullying in schools – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying
FSAP	38. We will take action to widen access to university: our ambition is that any child born today should have an equal chance of entering university, no matter what their socio-economic background is
StC	3. Ensure childcare commitments focus on quality to improve outcomes, and consider providing a limited number of free hours of childcare for primary school aged children

Updates on the recommendations and actions listed above can be found in the [Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report](#).

Early learning and childcare

FSAP	32. By 2018, we will ensure that every nursery in our most deprived areas has an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate (they are now called Equity and Excellence Leads)
FSAP	33. We are committed to making real progress in closing the attainment gap during the lifetime of this Parliament and to eliminate it, as far as we can, over the next decade
FSAP	35. We will tackle poverty directly for some of our most vulnerable children by delivering parity of child allowances between kinship and foster carers

Local authorities reported in March 2020 that the vast majority – over 95% (418 full time equivalent posts) - of Equity and Excellence lead posts have been recruited since August 2018. With 30 Local Authorities reported having recruited all the Equity and Excellence Lead posts in their areas at some point, even if the post-holder has since moved on.

The Scottish Government is working with the Care Inspectorate to understand how the policy is being implemented and whether Equity and Excellence Leads are being deployed in the best way for promoting quality of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and improving child outcomes. From September 2019, this included a specific focus area for the remainder of the inspection year to understand how Equity and Excellence Leads are being deployed in ELC settings in Scotland and assess what indications there are of early impact of Leads on: children’s learning and wellbeing outcomes; family engagement and involvement in their child’s learning; and practitioner skills. The Special Inspection Focus was paused due to COVID-19. We are drawing together the data collected to date alongside case studies of good practice in the work Leads have been doing, including during lockdown, into a progress report.

We recognise that disruption caused by the pandemic is impacting children from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly severely. We have encouraged local authorities and schools to target support where it is most needed, giving them flexibility to redirect Attainment Scotland Funding to help mitigate the impacts of school closures on our most disadvantaged families, and to make adjustments to existing plans to be delivered as schools return.

For the first time, Pupil Equity Fund allocations of over £250 million were confirmed for two years (2020/21 and 2021/22) benefitting 97% of schools and giving head teachers assistance in their planning and decision making. As well as taking total investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to over £750 million over the last five years, this also extends the programme for a further year beyond this Parliamentary term and provides invaluable long-term commitment.

Following the announcement in 2015 of additional funding to ensure local parity (i.e. within their local authority area) of allowances between kinship and foster carers, the Scottish Government is working with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to agree how to best take forward the recommendations of the 2018 National Review of Foster, Kinship and Adoption Care Allowances. The implementation of these recommendations will improve consistency and transparency for looked after children, their families and their carers across Scotland.

As part of our Winter Plan, we will create a £1 million fund which will be open to early learning and childcare settings delivering the universal funded ELC offer to bid into to purchase outdoor clothing to support children who need it. This fund will ensure that all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds have access to suitable outdoor clothing during their time in early learning and childcare, should they need it allowing them to enjoy as much time outdoors as they can with the resulting benefits.

Housing

The quality of our housing is one of the most important factors in determining our quality of life and ensuring everyone has access to a safe, warm and affordable place to call home is at the heart of our ambition for a Fairer Scotland.

The coronavirus crisis has reiterated the fundamental importance of safe and good quality housing for all. That means continuing our programme of housebuilding, and ensuring both new and existing homes are energy efficient and high quality, creating jobs as part of our investment in construction and retro-fitting.

We were on target to reach our ambitious target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes – with 35,000 for social rent backed by £3.5 million investment this parliament. The lockdown of course disrupted this work, but homes will be completed as quickly as it is safe to do so. We are proud of our record of delivering 95,000 affordable homes since 2007.

This year we have allocated more than £198 million to our domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency programmes. By the end of 2021, we will have allocated over £1 billion since 2009 to tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency. We will publish the final Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2021 with a target date of 2040 to tackle the root causes of fuel poverty.

We also recently announced a further £16 million to improve the energy efficiency of people's homes to make them warmer and cheaper to heat, taking our total grant funding this year to support fuel poor households to £97 million.

Over the next Parliament we will invest nearly £1.6 billion in transforming our buildings to ensure that emissions from heating are eliminated by 2040 to remove poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. The deal uplifts Heat and Energy efficiency spend from £112 million in 2019-20 to £398 million per annum in 2025-26.

We recognise that some groups are at higher risk of homelessness than others and will continue to implement the homelessness prevention pathways so that people leaving prison, care leavers and victims of domestic abuse have positive housing pathways that support them to keep a settled home and achieve positive outcomes in their lives.

On 8 October 2020, we published a revised Ending Homelessness Together action plan⁸. It outlines how national government, local government and third sector partners will work together on our shared ambition to end homelessness. It has been updated to reflect actions needed in response to the global coronavirus pandemic and is informed by people who have

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-october-2020/pages/1/>

experience of homelessness and rough sleeping and by the insights of those who work in homelessness services.

As part of our Winter Plan, we announced an extra £5.14 million for homelessness purposes. £5 million of this will go to local authorities to support their work on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans which aims to move people through temporary accommodation into settled accommodation. Of this £140,000 will be used to support homeless people directly.

FSAP	14. We will deliver more warm and affordable homes in this parliament
FSAP	16. We will build on Scotland’s world-leading homelessness rights
StC	7. Build more social housing
StC	8. Ensure fuel poverty programmes are focused to support those on low incomes, and do more to tackle the poverty premium in home energy costs
Life Chances	14. Deliver more affordable housing options for young adults
Life Chances	15. Ensure that tenants and landlords understand the arrangements for enforcing private rented sector regulations, and that monitoring is in place to make sure the new arrangements work as intended

Updates on the recommendations and actions listed above can be found in the [Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report](#).

Support for tenants

Life Chances	13. Improve housing advice for young people
Life Chances	16. Encourage social landlords to make the social sector easier for young people to access

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have taken additional steps to increase awareness of housing rights and sign post tenants to further sources of housing advice and assistance including:

- three social media campaigns highlighting tenancy rights and the financial support available;
- publication of a private rented sector tenant resource in collaboration between Public Health Scotland, Citizens Advice Scotland and Shelter Scotland which provides a comprehensive guide to support and advice for those living in the private rented sector during the pandemic, and
- the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning wrote to all private rented and social housing tenants in Scotland, providing information on their rights and the support available to them.

Under the Scottish Social Housing Charter, social landlords must ensure that people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed. They also need to ensure that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them. These apply to all people looking for housing including young people. We will be reviewing the Charter during 2021 to ensure these outcomes are fit for purpose.

Council Tax

StC	9. Be bold on local tax reform
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The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR) means nobody has to endure financial difficulties because they have lost the ability to pay their council tax, including those impacted by COVID-19. We have allocated £25 million to councils to help them meet the increased costs of the CTR scheme, in addition to the £351 million we already provide for the scheme.

We are committed to making local taxation more progressive, whilst improving the financial accountability of local government. During the course of the Budget 2019-20 process, we committed to implement a package of local tax reforms that would deliver the most significant empowerment of local authorities since devolution.

We were on track to implement the measures in this package but the COVID-19 pandemic response meant work to deliver these commitments had to be paused.

Social security and benefit up-take

Social Security Scotland was established in 2018 and is a system based on dignity, fairness and respect that places clients at its heart. Already, the Agency is successfully delivering eight benefits, four of which are new and the others more generous and/or with increased eligibility than the UK benefits they have replaced.

Scottish Child Payment opened for applications for families with children under six years old on 9 November. We are expecting a significant demand and are asking families to get their applications in early so that we can process and start making payments as quickly as possible once the benefit starts on 15 February 2021.

Scottish Child Payment will provide £10 per child per week, with no limit on the number of eligible children that can be claimed for, and combined with the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods this means that low income families are eligible to receive over £5,200 of support for their first child by the time they turn six.

Our ambition remains to roll out Scottish Child Payment to under 16s by the end of 2022. However, we are absolutely dependent on DWP giving us the data we need to make payments to 6-16 year old children. Once fully rolled-out to under 16 year olds, in 2022-23 499,000 children could be eligible⁹.

Recognising the importance of maximising people's incomes in tackling poverty and disadvantage, on 21 October we published the first Benefit Take-up Strategy¹⁰ under the provision of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. The Strategy sets out Scottish Ministers' work supporting benefit take-up to date. It also introduces a series of new activities and initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of and access to Scottish benefits and supporting those who are eligible to apply. We will publish our next strategy by October 2021 and will produce a benefits eligibility checker available online.

We will consider which benefits need specific attention and how partners and online content can help us strengthen our approach. We will also explore with COSLA how to embed Scotland's Social Security principles and human rights-based approach within the local authority level benefits and payments system.

We will work with COSLA to build on good practice in relation to automation of local level benefits and payments and to consider a national approach where possible.

FSAP	17. We will make social security fairer where we can
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⁹ <https://www.fiscalcommission.scot/forecast/supplementary-costing-scottish-child-payment/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-scotland-act-2019-benefit-take-up-strategy-october-2019/>

FSAP	19. We will work with a range of partners to help people claim the benefits they are entitled to
FSAP	39. We will introduce a Job Grant for young people aged 16-24 who have been out of work for six months or more
StC	5. Do more to ensure that people claim the benefits they are entitled to
StC	6. Make effective use of new social security powers but proceed with caution

Updates on the recommendations and actions listed above can be found in the [Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report](#).

Carer's Allowance Supplement

As a result of lockdown, unpaid carers have had to take on additional responsibilities, including balancing the challenges of home working and increased caring responsibilities, often without the same support which would have previously been available to them. Emerging research suggests there may be an additional 400,000 people undertaking unpaid care as a result of COVID-19.

In June, the Scottish Government made a one-off Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement payment of £230. This was in addition to the regular six monthly Carer's Allowance Supplement, benefitting around 83,000 of Scotland's lowest income carers with some of the most intense caring roles. This additional payment, together with the existing six-monthly Carers Allowance Supplement, will mean that eligible carers in Scotland in receipt of Carer's Allowance will receive an additional £690 this year on top of their Carer's Allowance

Scottish Child Payment

The 'game-changing' Scottish Child Payment for under 6s opened for applications on 9 November. It is a significant new benefit and the most ambitious anti-poverty measure currently being undertaken anywhere in the UK. It is the biggest benefit that we have introduced to date, and could support up to 194,000 children this financial year¹¹.

Forecast expenditure on the benefit for the first full year of the Scottish Child Payment's roll-out to under 6s stand at £77 million¹² in 2021/22. It is therefore a significant investment in the people of Scotland and as a demand led benefit, we guarantee that all those who apply and are eligible will receive their entitlement. Our plans to promote Scottish Child Payment are set out in a publicly available policy position paper¹³, and these include: providing information in midwife and health visitor packs; issuing materials through nursery and school enrolment packs; and advertising online, on radio and in print.

¹¹ <https://www.fiscalcommission.scot/forecast/supplementary-costing-scottish-child-payment/>

¹² <https://www.fiscalcommission.scot/forecast/supplementary-costing-scottish-child-payment/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/maximising-take-up-scottish-child-payment-position-paper/>

Social policy

The Scottish Government responded swiftly to the risk COVID-19 posed to those on low incomes, announcing a £350 million Communities Support package of support on 18 March and we have taken a person centred approach in our response to the pandemic. This package included over £120 million to tackle food insecurity, £80 million in awards to community and third sector organisations to take forward projects which support the wellbeing of people across Scotland and an additional £22 million to local authorities for the Scottish Welfare Fund.

In October we made a further £30 million available to local authorities over the winter period to tackle financial insecurity. This includes a £20 million flexible fund to tackle financial insecurity and over £10 million to continue the provision of Free School Meals across the Christmas, February and Easter Holidays for around 156,000 children. Local authorities can use the new flexible fund to top-up Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payment allocations and to support low income people with household bills including food and fuel.

On 30 November we announced the £100 million Winter Plan for Social Protection which has been developed to mitigate social harms posed by the concurrent risks of COVID-19, winter cost of living increases and EU exit; as well as to promote equality and human rights. Key elements of the Plan include:

- £22 million for low income families, including a one-off £100 payment for children from low income households in receipt of Free School Meals to be paid by Christmas.
- £23.5 million to help vulnerable children through additional support for residential and care homes, social work, and the Children's Hearing system.
- £15 million for the Communities and Third Sector Recovery Programme to enhance capacity in the third sector and communities and enable more community and third sector organisations to be supported.
- £5.9 million to promote digital inclusion for older people, support social isolation and loneliness and to promote equality
- £7 million to help people who are struggling to pay fuel bills
- £5 million to help those at risk of homelessness find a settled home

The Plan also includes £15 million of flexible funding for local authorities entering COVID-19 protection level 4 - announced by the First Minister in November – which can be used to pay for food and essentials. This funding is in addition to the £15 million allocated to local authorities in July to provide support for food and essentials.

People on low incomes will be eligible to receive a new £500 grant if asked to self-isolate. Applications for the new Self Isolation Support Grant (SISG)

opened on 12 October and will help those who would lose income if they needed to self-isolate, such as those unable to carry out their work from home.

This grant is for those who will face financial hardship due to being asked to self-isolate and initially targeted at people who are in receipt of Universal Credit or legacy benefits, with some discretion to make awards to others in financial hardship. From 7 December we have extended the grant to parents of children aged under 16 who need to take time off work because their child is told to self-isolate, and also to people who are eligible for Universal Credit, but have not claimed it – providing they fulfil all of the other criteria for the grant.

These payments are designed to help ensure people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts self-isolate for the required period to stop the onward spread of the virus.

In June this year we created the Social Renewal Advisory Board (the Board). Its role is to advise the Scottish Government on how to build a stronger, fairer and more equal Scotland for the post-pandemic period. The Board aims to build on the shifts in policy and practice we saw in the immediate response to COVID-19 where, by working at pace and in partnership, we challenged traditional ways of working to deliver real change.

Proposals were developed by a series of expert discussion groups known as ‘policy circles’. The circles are focusing on Age and Disability, Addressing Low Income, Community-led Place Based Renewal, Cross Cutting Delivery, Financial Security, the Housing System, Access to Food, the Third Sector, and Communities and Volunteering.

Underpinning all the Board’s work is a commitment to advancing equality and promoting and protecting human rights. COVID-19 has intensified many pre-existing inequalities, and it is crucial that the policies we are putting in place work for all of Scotland’s people.

Initial recommendations from the Board’s discussions are set out across the Programme for Government. The Board is now developing further proposals on social renewal and will set these out in full in an independent report in early 2021.

Fairer Scotland

FSAP	5. Tackle the poverty premium
FSAP	7. We will do more to help people to have a say in their local areas
FSAP	20. Over the term of this parliament, we will work to make Scotland a Good Food Nation by enabling more people to have access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food, in a dignified way
FSAP	48. Help older people claim the financial support they are entitled to

Life Chances	1. Develop new advice provision for young people, supported by a skilled, trained workforce
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To ensure that older people and low income families are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to and are not paying more than they need to for basic goods and services, known as the 'poverty premium', we launched the Money Talk Team income maximisation service in 2018. It is backed by investment of £3.3 million over two years and in its first 21 months of service delivery (November 2018 to July 2020), over 23,000 clients accessed the service and client financial gain of almost £20.7 million was recorded for 11,760 clients. This means on average each household is better off by almost £1,800. A total of 5,397 of the clients accessing the service identified themselves as aged over 60 and of those 2,634 clients had recorded financial gain of £4.27 million.

To help young people access the help and support they need, initial exploratory work commenced on advice provision for young people, but the impact of COVID-19 has slowed down this work while advice providers have had to quickly adapt to new ways of working. We will look to progress further as normal services begin to resume.

The Scottish Government has committed over £130 million to tackle food insecurity caused by the pandemic. Of this we invested £50.3 million to cover our nationally coordinated response for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, known as the 'shielded' group. Funding to local authorities for people struggling to access food has encouraged a 'cash-first' (direct financial transfer) approach to ensure those who can get to the shops have the money they need to buy food and other essentials. Scotland is unique across the UK in taking this 'cash-first' approach to food insecurity, founded in principles of dignity and human rights. The food insecurity funding for local authorities has included over £37 million to continue the delivery of Free School Meal provision over school closures and holidays up to Easter 2021. This support is reaching 156,000 children and young people.

Due to COVID-19 we have not been able to introduce The Good Food Nation Bill this Parliamentary term. However Scottish Ministers have committed to work together to develop a new non-statutory statement on food policy, to build on recent experience of coronavirus response, and will consider rights, security, production and availability of food. This work is being led by the Ministerial Working Group on Food to ensure that the cross cutting approach that is needed to take forward key aspects of national policy is in place. This work is in the initial stages and further details will be available in due course.

Participatory budgeting (PB) gives communities a direct say in decisions on how public money is spent locally and our programme of support for this has given over a 120,000 people a say on how money is spent in their community. In September 2020, we established a National Strategic PB Group to provide strategic direction for PB in Scotland, particularly in light of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the opportunities to 'build back better' as part of the recovery.

Launched in October 2017 the 'Community Choices Framework Agreement' is a milestone in Scotland's PB journey giving communities more influence than ever in how public funding is spent in their community. We remain committed to that

Agreement which sets the expectations that 1% of local authority budgets would be subject to PB by 2020/21, approximately £100 million. Much PB activity paused due to COVID-19 impacts and we have worked in partnership with COSLA and the National Strategic PB Group to agree that the framework will remain in place to celebrate those local authorities who can meet that target while offering flexibility to those who require more time.

On 30 July we published a report on an independent evaluation of asset transfer legislation. Asset transfer makes it easier for communities groups to take on public sector land and buildings, including ownership or lease of forests, parks, woodlands, sports and recreational facilities and community hubs. The report shows that activity is increasing, with 81 asset transfer request approved, the majority of these from local authorities.

Participation Requests also make it easier for communities to have their voice heard by contributing to the decision-making processes for service change or improvement in their local area. We commissioned researchers to carry out an independent evaluation of Participation Request legislation. The final report¹⁴, published in April 2020, shows that the legislation is working as it was intended and makes recommendations we will use to help inform our future policy support.

In addition, in September 2020 we refreshed the National Standards for Community Engagement to help public bodies engage communities for recovery and renewal following the COVID-19 pandemic and to make the most effective use of the resources we have by listening to people with lived experience of disadvantage and inequality to establish and act on their priorities.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/participation-requests-evaluation-part-3-community-empowerment-scotland-act-2015/pages/1/>

Equality

COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on all of our communities and people, but particularly those who were most at-risk to start with. It again highlights why now is the time to think about things differently and to renew our focus on the goals of reducing inequality and improving the quality of life of all of our people

We will only achieve the ambitions we have set out, and ensure a genuinely collective recovery for everyone, by putting equality and human rights at the heart of our approach. We will ensure everyone in Scotland receives the support they need, and we will take action to tackle the systemic injustices in our society.

We are taking a cross-portfolio approach to implementing the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity and build this into our ambitious plans to advance race equality. We will prioritise action to promote equality and human rights for minority ethnic communities.

By the end of 2020 we will establish a national race equality network to produce an action plan with annual progress targets for health and social care employment at all levels of seniority in relation to minority ethnic groups. The national network will also review existing recruitment and promotion processes. Through our Leadership and Talent Management Programmes, we will increase the numbers of minority ethnic staff in senior and executive team roles.

Partnering with Museums Galleries Scotland, in collaboration with race equality and museums sector stakeholders, we will sponsor an independent expert group to make recommendations on how Scotland's existing and future museum collections we can better recognise and represent a more accurate portrayal of Scotland's colonial and slavery history and what further steps should be taken to ensure people in Scotland are aware of the role Scotland played and how that manifests itself in our society today.

More equal Scotland

FSAP	8. We will take action to make democratic institutions more representative of the communities they serve
FSAP	12. We will take forward the implementation of the Race Equality Framework
FSAP	13. We will review and reform gender recognition law so it is in line with international best practice for people who are Transgender or Intersex

Building on the on-going success of the Access to Elected Office Fund, established for the 2017 Scottish local authority elections, we established a Public Appointment Shadowing Placement Programme in June 2019. This programme, which finished in

September 2020, provided opportunities for five disabled people to shadow public body Boards. Each person was mentored by a member of the Board and participated in discussions and sub committees of the Board. The outcomes included demystifying the work of boards, building participants' confidence to apply for public appointments and improving boards' awareness of disability issues. On 24 September 2020, we held a workshop bringing together everyone who have been involved in the scheme in order to help evaluate it and we will produce an evaluation report on 15 December 2020.

Our Race Equality Action Plan 2017–2020, outlines the activity we have undertaken over the course of this Parliament to secure better outcomes for minority ethnic communities in Scotland. These steps are a vital part of the action we are taking towards achieving the vision as set out in the Race Equality Framework.

On 20 March 2020 we published the Year 2 progress update on our Action Plan and a final year report will be published in 2021. This report will include a full update of progress towards achieving our ambitions in the Framework.

We will of course need to pay particular attention to the issues that have been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity.

Further to a consultation on the principles of reform, we have now conducted a second consultation on the provisions of the draft Gender Recognition (Scotland) Bill. The consultation on the draft Bill included a draft Equality Impact Assessment, and was open for responses from 17 December 2019 to 17 March 2020.

However, on 1 April 2020, the Minister for Parliamentary Business informed Parliament that, in light of the on-going impact of COVID-19, work on a number of planned government bills has been halted. As a result, we will not now bring forward a Bill to reform the gender recognition process in this parliamentary session.

We will continue to deliver the other related actions, short of legislation, which we committed to last year, including the working group on non-binary people's equality and a working group on data on sex and gender.

Health, including mental health

COVID-19 – the single greatest public health crisis of our lifetimes – has had a profound impact on our health, economy and society, indeed our whole way of life. As we adjust to living with COVID-19 for the immediate future, we must promote lifelong health and wellbeing.

Before the crisis, we know there were too many people at risk as a result of long term health conditions – the crisis has exacerbated that. We will focus on the determinants of health inequalities, and drive forward our efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing.

We will renew our work on improving population health, in recognition of the impact the virus has had. This will have a clear focus on mental health and wellbeing and also the specific impacts the virus has had on existing health inequalities. While of course there are causes of poor health that we can tackle and treat, at their core they are determined by social inequalities. It is why the wellbeing economy that we want to build is so vital; a healthier workforce means a healthier economy, and vice versa.

To set out how we will ensure our action on mental health recognises, learns from, and responds to the challenges of COVID-19, we published our Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan in October 2020.

Health support for young families

FSAP	21. Scotland's most deprived communities need additional support on health, so we will recruit at least 250 Community Links Workers to work with GP surgeries to connect people with local services and support
FSAP	23. From 1 April 2017 coverage of the 'Childsmile' national oral health improvement programme will be extended to reach even more comparatively deprived communities

We remain on course to deliver our commitment of 250 Community Link Workers (CLWs) by the end of this Parliament. There were 112 CLWs in post when the data on recruitment was collected nationally in September 2019. The reporting process to track progress of the CLW programme was temporarily suspended in March 2020 to allow Health and Social Care Partnerships to focus on their response to COVID-19, but has now reconvened. A survey issued in June to establish how COVID-19 was affecting the work of CLWs reported back no significant impact on recruitment.

Our Integrated Health and Social Care Workforce Plan commits funding to address the shortfall in Mental Health Officers (MHOs) by 2022-23. To deliver that commitment an MHO Capacity Building Grant Scheme, has been developed in close partnership with local authorities, COSLA and other stakeholders making £1.5 million available over three years. In 2019-2020 the Scheme awarded £0.5 million to 13 local authorities to train 19 additional MHOs. A further £0.5 million will be invested in each of 2020/21 and 2021/21.

COVID-19 has however impacted on our ability to report on oral health inequalities. The Childsmile Programme, where nursery and schoolchildren receive regular tooth brushing instruction and fluoride varnish application, is now part of the mainstream dental provision delivered in nurseries and school throughout Scotland. Due to the COVID restrictions we did not receive a 2020 report from the National Dental Inspection Programme and are therefore unable to confirm whether oral health inequalities have narrowed further since last year. The Childsmile programme is expected to resume in early 2021.

Mental health

Life Chances	17. Take action to embed positive mental health approaches, based on quality evidence, in key settings where young people engage
Life Chances	18. The Scottish Government should fund applied research on school and classroom practices that encourage wellbeing and mental health

In 2017, we launched our ten year plan for mental health, backed by an initial £150 million over the course of this Parliament. In 2018, we committed to invest a further £250 million in mental health over the next five years to improve services for children, young people and adults.

All education authorities have an implementation plan in place for providing school counsellors and many have accelerated the implementation of their plans in response to COVID-19. We will also increase the school nursing workforce by an additional 250 school nurses by the end of 2022. We will continue to deliver on our 2018 Programme for Government commitment for more than 80 additional counsellors in colleges and universities over four years and are currently over two-thirds of the way to meeting that commitment.

In 2019, we convened a Mental Health in Schools Working Group, made up of key stakeholders with expertise in this area, to support the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to supporting positive mental health in children and young people in school. In May 2020, the Group published, for the first time, a resource¹⁵ which collates all the resources available to schools to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. As part of this work, a new professional learning resource for all school staff will be published in spring 2021 which will provide essential learning required to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The Group is also developing a Whole School Approach framework around mental health to support schools which will link into classroom practices.

¹⁵ <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/resources-for-school-staff-to-support-positive-mental-wellbeing-of-children-and-young-people/>

Other actions

Collaboration is often required across a number of areas to make progress on tackling poverty and reducing inequalities, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of the efforts to make Scotland fairer. The recommendations and actions contained in this section are clear examples of Scottish Government activity which cut across a number of the themes, such as those on public service delivery, public sector reform and inclusive growth.

Life Chances	12. Do more to provide subsidised/free transport for young people aged 25 and under
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An update on the action above can be found in the [Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report](#).

Broadband

FSAP	6. We will deliver 100% superfast broadband access by 2021, helping low income households reduce costs
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We will deliver on our commitment to ensure that every premises in Scotland will have access to superfast broadband by the end of 2021 through our Reaching 100% (R100) programme. This will be delivered through three strands of activity, namely the £600 million R100 contracts in North, Central and South Scotland, our Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (a supplier-led voucher scheme for businesses and homes worth up to £5,000) which opened for applications in September 2020, and through commercial coverage. Work has commenced on the Central and South of Scotland contracts with BT and we aim to sign the North contract by the end of 2020.

We are also taking action to eliminate digital exclusion and tackle the digital divide in Scotland which has been shown in sharp focus during the pandemic when physical ways of staying in touch and contact were restricted. During lockdown, working with the third sector, councils and Scotland's tech industry, we established Connecting Scotland. It has provided iPads and Chromebooks, with internet connections, and helps tackle the causes and consequences of poverty. The initial priority was people shielding or at high risk of severe illness. The programme is now helping care leavers and low income households with children. It connects families, improves employment opportunities and provides better access to health care and education.

We intend to significantly expand the programme in the coming year and are investing £43 million to allow us to reach 50,000 low income households, providing a device, internet connection, training and support to get people online. On 30 November as part of our Winter Plan, we announced a further extension of the programme to help to 5,000 socially isolated older and disabled people to get online over the winter months.

Inclusive growth

Life Chances	11. Do more to disseminate models of good practice on inclusive growth
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Scotland's Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth was launched by the Scottish Government in July 2018 to support and enable the delivery of inclusive growth across Scotland. The Centre works across government, industry and academia to provide access to toolkits and data, research and examples of good practice that support the delivery of more inclusive economic outcomes. It also delivers an inclusive growth 'community of practice' in partnership with Economic Development Association Scotland which brings together public, private and third sector partners to share lessons and experience of how to deliver inclusive growth on the ground.

Justice

FSAP	24. We will make better use of community-based interventions to reduce re-offending further and to help people move on from offending
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The presumption against short periods of imprisonment was extended to 12 months or less in 2019 following Parliamentary scrutiny and approval. This move will help mitigate the detrimental impact of short periods of imprisonment by instead better supporting the rehabilitation of individuals who have offended and prevent reoffending. In February this year we published information to monitor the effects of the implementation of the Extension to the Presumption Against Short Sentences¹⁶.

The Scottish Budget for 2020-21 increased investment in community justice services to more than £117 million, which is an increase of over £6.5 million. Programme for Government 2020-21 affirms our commitment to promote and expand the availability of effective community interventions, including bringing forward regulations for the use of electronic monitoring on bail, supporting increased accessibility to supervised bail services and publishing guidance on structured deferred sentences.

Public sector reform and public service delivery

FSAP	9. We will reform public services to deliver the highest quality service to users, with dignity and respect at their core
StC	14. Ensure that public service delivery is respectful, person-centred and preserves the dignity of people in poverty: pre-employment and in-service training should include the importance of avoiding stigma and developing understanding of the challenges of living on a very low income

Public services, community organisations and charities have come together to respond to the crisis collaboratively – with speed, conviction that a common

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/extended-presumption-against-short-sentences-monitoring-information-july-2019-december-2019/pages/1/>

challenge presents, and agility in overcoming long-standing barriers. This has been buoyed by strong community spirit, commitment to informal volunteering and mutual aid. The Scottish Government has also acted well. To quote Caroline Gardner, former Auditor General for Scotland, the Scottish Government “*has responded quickly and at scale, reorienting its organisational structures, resources and governance arrangements to react to the pandemic*”.

As outlined earlier in this report, the work of the recently established Social Renewal Advisory Board will help shape the new normal that we now move into and joined up public services that are person-centred, agile and responsive to best practice will be key to this work. The Board’s independent advice will support Ministers in overcoming the challenges faced and help drive progress towards a fairer, more equal Scotland in the wake of COVID-19.

We continue to fund access to free period products in education and wider community settings – estimated to benefit around 400,000 people in education alone. In addition, we have provided funding to enable grassroots sports clubs to provide free products and help reduce the stigma and address the overarching gender equality and dignity issues that affect everyone who menstruates. This will help to ensure people feel they belong and are welcome to participate in club and community sport. Through investment of £1.5 million to FareShare since 2018, almost 80,000 people on low incomes have benefitted from access to free period products which represents around 25% of women and girls living in relative poverty.

In a survey¹⁷ of over 3,000 pupils and students in Scotland, conducted between June and September 2019, almost two thirds of respondents reported they had benefitted from access to period products in education settings. Around one in eight reported that they or their families did not have sufficient income to buy products and 84% of respondents felt the provision had a positive impact on them, with improvements in mental health and wellbeing and increased attendance at school.

In partnership with Zero Waste Scotland and Marine Scotland, we ran a campaign entitled “Trial Period” across November and December 2019 to raise awareness of the benefits of reusable period products and to give people a chance to try out some of the available range of such products. The campaign was such a success that the Scottish Government provided extra funding for further products, and almost 3,000 reusable products were distributed in total.

From January to March this year, we ran another awareness raising campaign, which focussed on tackling the stigma around talking openly about periods thereby helping to encourage and normalise these conversations and access products.

Through our collaborative work on the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill, which passed by the Scottish Parliament on 24 November 2020, access to free period products will be enshrined in law for anyone who needs them, building on Scotland’s world-leading work in this area.

¹⁷ [Access to period products in your school, college or university Survey Results](#) – Dec 2019

Progress at a glance

This table provides a quick overview of the progress made on each of the actions and recommendations across the three separate reports. It indicates whether the policy:

- is at an early stage of development
- is in progress
- has been completed, or
- is one of continuous development where we will carry on pushing for improvements and making changes.

Fairer Scotland Action Plan actions	Status
1. In 2017, we will introduce a new socio-economic duty on public bodies	Completed
2. We will provide £100,000 new funding so that, across Scotland, people with experience of living in poverty can speak out, tackle stigma and push for change to public services	Completed
3. Building on the work of local Fairness and Poverty Commissions, we will establish a national Poverty and Inequality Commission in 2017/18	Completed
4. We will launch a new £29 million programme, including £12.5 million from the European Social Fund, to tackle poverty in Scotland	Completed
5. We will take action to tackle the poverty premium	In progress
6. We will deliver 100% superfast broadband access by 2021, helping low income households reduce costs	In progress
7. We will do more to help people to have a say in their local areas	Continuous programme of work
8. We will take action to make democratic institutions more representative of the communities they serve	In progress
9. We will reform public services to deliver the highest quality service to users, with dignity and respect at their core	In progress
10. We will establish an Advisory Council on Women and Girls	Completed
11. We will make sure that refugee families who settle here under Family Reunion rules can access crisis grants quickly and efficiently	Completed
12. We will take forward the implementation of the Race Equality Framework	In progress
13. We will review and reform gender recognition law so it is in line with international best practice for people who are Transgender or Intersex	In progress
14. We will deliver more warm and affordable homes in this parliament	In progress
15. We will deliver improved services for tenants in the private rented sector (PRS) in 2018	Completed
16. We will build on Scotland's world-leading homelessness rights	Continuous programme of work
17. We will make social security fairer where we can	Continuous programme of work
18. We will do more to help carers as soon as we have the ability	Completed
19. We will work with a range of partners to help people claim the benefits they are entitled to	In progress
20. Over the term of this parliament, we will work to make Scotland a Good Food Nation by enabling more people to have access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food, in a dignified way	In progress
21. Scotland's most deprived communities need additional support on health, so we will recruit at least 250 Community Links Workers to work with GP surgeries to connect people with local services and support	In progress
22. Within the next two years, we will extend home visiting services for families with young children	Completed

23. From 1 April 2017 coverage of the 'Childsmile' national oral health improvement programme will be extended to reach even more comparatively deprived communities	In progress
24. We will make better use of community-based interventions to reduce re-offending further and to help people move on from offending	Continuous programme of work
25. In the first year of the current parliament, we will introduce a Bill to establish domestic abuse as a specific offence	Completed
26. In early 2017, we will introduce a new Child Poverty Bill	Completed
27. As part of our support for families with children in the early years, we will introduce a Scottish Baby Box in 2017 to help reduce the costs of providing for a child in the early days and weeks of life that some families may find challenging	Completed
28. We will create a new Best Start Grant to bring together the system for Healthy Start food vouchers and the UK Sure Start Maternity Grant when powers transfer to Scottish Ministers, as part of our focus on reducing inequalities in early years, and subject to the outcome of the consultation on the Future of Social Security in Scotland	Completed
29. By 2020, entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) will almost double for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as those 2 year olds that stand to benefit most, to 1140 hours per year (from current levels of 600 hours per year)	In progress
30. We will take action to reduce the costs of school for low income parents	Continuous programme of work
31. From April 2017, our proposed reforms will make the current Council Tax system fairer for low income families	Completed
32. By 2018, we will ensure that every nursery in our most deprived areas has an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate	In progress
33. We are committed to making real progress in closing the attainment gap during the lifetime of this Parliament and to eliminate it, as far as we can, over the next decade	Continuous programme of work
34. We will do more to address bullying in schools – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying	In progress
35. We will tackle poverty directly for some of our most vulnerable children by delivering parity of child allowances between kinship and foster carers	In progress
36. We will take action to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021	In progress
37. We will significantly increase the numbers of young people getting industry experience while still at school to help them kick-start a successful career in their chosen field	In progress
38. We will take action to widen access to university: our ambition is that any child born today should have an equal chance of entering university, no matter what their socio-economic background is	Continuous programme of work
39. We will introduce a Job Grant for young people aged 16-24 who have been out of work for six months or more	In progress
40. We will ensure that support for housing costs is not taken away from young people aged 18-21	Completed

41. Transport Scotland is working with Young Scot to make the National Entitlement Card smart ready for 11-25 year olds	Completed
42. We will do more to promote the Living Wage	Continuous programme of work
43. We will do more to help people in Scotland work flexibly	Continuous programme of work
44. We will improve employment services for disabled people	Continuous programme of work
45. By the end of 2016, we will launch a pilot 'Returners' project to help bring experienced women back into the workplace after a career break	In progress
46. We will tackle discrimination on pregnancy and maternity leave in the workplace	Continuous programme of work
47. We will help those older people who want to keep working after they have reached state pension age	In progress
48. We will help older people claim the financial support they are entitled to	In progress
49. Our planned reforms to council tax will protect older people on low incomes	Completed
50. We will improve the current system of Funeral Payments, so it helps more people, is more predictable and provides help more quickly	Completed

Shifting the Curve recommendations	Status
1. Build on Living Wage Accreditation – a focus on larger employers, and on incentives, would be useful	Continuous programme of work
2. Encourage pay ratio disclosure as a way of tackling pay inequality	Continuous programme of work
3. Ensure childcare commitments focus on quality to improve outcomes, and consider providing a limited number of free hours of childcare for primary school aged children	In progress
4. Make family flexible working more explicit within the Business Pledge, and consider whether approaches such as the Timewise programme could promote flexible working in Scotland	In progress
5. Do more to ensure that people claim the benefits they are entitled to	In progress
6. Make effective use of new social security powers but proceed with caution	Continuous programme of work
7. Build more social housing	In progress
8. Ensure fuel poverty programmes are focused to support those on low incomes, and do more to tackle the poverty premium in home energy costs	In progress
9. Be bold on local tax reform	In progress
10. Carry out a comprehensive review of the policies and services relevant to the life chances of older children and young adults, with particular emphasis on young people from poorer backgrounds	Completed
11. Reduce the number of government-supported employment programmes targeting this group of young people and simplify the landscape, to provide a clearer, sharper focus	In progress
12. Ensure that the new approach to employer engagement in education is having an impact on improving skills for work of young people	In progress
13. Do more to tackle occupational segregation	Continuous programme of work
14. Ensure that public service delivery is respectful, person-centred and preserves the dignity of people in poverty: pre-employment and in-service training should include the importance of avoiding stigma and developing understanding of the challenges of living on a very low income	In progress
15. Commence the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010, when powers are available to do so	Completed

The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland recommendations	Status
1. Develop new advice provision for young people, supported by a skilled, trained workforce	Early stages of delivery
2. Continue work to improve data collection and sharing to track post school participation in learning, training and work for young people and make better use of that information to improve service delivery and develop Scottish Government policy	Continuous programme of work
3. Do more to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Developing the Young Workforce regional groups in building systematic engagement between local employers and schools and colleges on local and regional skills shortages	Continuous programme of work
4. Do more to value non-academic learning routes, post-school	Continuous programme of work
5. The Scottish Government should, through the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, ensure our FE and HE systems have more flex built in so young people can shift between routes	Early stages of delivery
6. Employers need to think about 'job design' and recruitment processes that are free from bias and that match requirements for the job with the skill level needed to make applications	In progress
7. All post-school internships should be advertised and every post-school intern should get paid	Completed
8. Raise concerns with DWP about the quality of support offered to young people in Jobcentre Plus	Completed
9. Lobby the UK Government about exploitative zero hour contracts	In progress
10. Lobby the UK Government on the need for the National Living Wage to apply to all those over 18 years old	In progress
11. Do more to disseminate models of good practice on inclusive growth	Continuous programme of work
12. Do more to provide subsidised/free transport for young people aged 25 and under	In progress
13. Improve housing advice for young people	Completed
14. Deliver more affordable housing options for young adults	In progress
15. Ensure that tenants and landlords understand the arrangements for enforcing private rented sector regulations, and that monitoring is in place to make sure the new arrangements work as intended	In progress
16. Encourage social landlords to make the social sector easier for young people to access	Completed
17. Take action to embed positive mental health approaches, based on quality evidence, in key settings where young people engage	In progress
18. The Scottish Government should fund applied research on school and classroom practices that encourage wellbeing and mental health	In progress



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